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NOTE ON THE DISCOVERY OF COMET *b*, 1893.

Dr. SWIFT has kindly furnished the following copy of a telegram received by him at 4 A. M. July 9 :

[COPY.]

SALT LAKE, Utah, July 8, 1893.

TO LEWIS SWIFT, WARNER Observatory, Rochester, N. Y.:

Naked eye comet observed 10 o'clock. Constellation Lynx. No telescopic observation possible.

ALFRED RORDAME.

135 East 4th South St.

The following letter from Mr. RORDAME gives additional particulars :

SALT LAKE CITY, July 20, 1893.

PROFESSOR E. S. HOLDEN, LICK Observatory :

DEAR SIR—Accept my thanks for your kindly letter, and I regret very much that through some delay of the post office employees I did not receive it until this morning.

The comet was first seen by me on July 8, at 10 P. M., at Garfield, on the south shore of the Salt Lake, as a nebulous star of about the third magnitude, and knowing that there was no star of that magnitude in that place (Lynx), I telegraphed at once to Prof. SWIFT. The tail became quite apparent to the naked eye after a few minutes' scrutiny. On my arrival in this city I tried to get a view of it with my telescope, but found it impossible on account of high buildings.

Respectfully yours, (Signed) ALFRED RORDAME.

135 E. 4th South Street.

Dr. SWIFT also communicates the following letter lately received by him :

ALTA, Iowa, July 12, 1893.

PROFESSOR SWIFT, WARNER Observatory, Rochester, N. Y.:

DEAR SIR—I wish to make a correction in regard to the discovery of the comet in the constellation Lynx. The telegraphic reports state that the comet was discovered by Mr. ALFRED RORDAME of Salt Lake City, at 10 o'clock on Saturday night, July 8, 1893. Here at Alta, some fifteen hundred miles to the east of Salt Lake City, it was first seen at 9:30 the same evening by two young men, whose names, by the way, are JAMES MILLER and CHARLES JOHNSON. They communicated their discovery to Mr. DAVID E. HADDEN, a local U. S. weather observer and amateur astronomer, who will vouch for the truth of the statement. Thus, considering the difference in time, the right of discovery is rightfully due to the above-named gentlemen by two or three hours. I have the honor of

knowing enough of Professor SWIFT to believe that he wishes to see justice done. If you should wish to have further proof of my statements, please advise me, and it shall be forwarded without delay.

Very respectfully, (Signed) C. H. WEGERSLEV,
Editor *Advertiser*, Alta, Iowa.

The comet was independently discovered by M. QUÉNISSET at the Observatory of Juvisy (France), on July 9; and on this date and on the following day it was noticed by several persons. M. ROSO DE LUNA of Logrosan, Estremadura, Spain, observed an object at 15 hours local time of July 4. He supposed it to be a new star, and made a sketch of its position, which he sent in a letter dated July 6 to the Director of the Madrid Observatory, who received it on July 8. The position of the comet according to the sketch was :

1893, July 4. 15^h l. m. t. R. A. = $5^h 3^m$, Dec. = $+ 42^\circ.9$.

The position from Prof. LAMP's ephemeris is :

1893, July 4. 16^h Berlin m. t. R. A. = $5^h 1.5^m$, Dec. = $+ 42^\circ.7$.

M. ROSO DE LUNA is therefore a discoverer of the comet, who communicated his observation with promptness. The fact that he did not recognize it as a comet is analogous to the mistake of Sir WILLIAM HERSCHEL, who in 1781 did not recognize *Uranus* as a planet, but supposed it to be a bright comet.

The Regulations for bestowing the Comet-Medal of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific are printed in these *Publications*, Volume III, page 146. Article II declares : "The medal will be given to the actual discoverer of any unexpected comet." Article IV goes on to define who the actual discoverer is : "The discoverer is to make the discovery known in the usual way," etc. The usual way is to notify some observatory at once by telegraph or letter, in order that the fruits of the discovery may be reaped. This condition was fulfilled by M. R. DE LUNA, by Mr. RORDAME and by M. QUÉNISSET.

In view of the possibility of an earlier discovery than that of M. DE LUNA, it has been decided to postpone the award of the medal for the present.

The Committee on the Comet-Medal.

EDWARD S. HOLDEN,
J. M. SCHAEBERLE,
CHAS. BURCKHALTER.

1893, September 8.